Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 040710
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
SSM-05 SIG-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05 SS-15 SSO-00
INRE-00 /088 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
----------033336 160226Z /13
O 160111Z PEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 040710

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS
CIA
USIA
NSC

UNCLAS STATE 040710

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 15

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 15. FYI ONLY SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS MR. KEN BROWN.

Q. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN SAYS THAT HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO

COME TO WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH TO TALK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHERS. CAN YOU GIVE US ANY DETAILS OF IT? ALSO, WOULD YOU ALSO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF HIS STATEMENT THAT HE IS COMING TO URGE THE UNITED STATES TO CHANGE ITS MIND ON THE AIRPLANE DEALS ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY?

A. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IN THE KNESSET THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD INVITED HIM TO VISIT WASHINGTON DURING THE EARLY PART OF MARCH AND THAT IS INDEED THE CASE. WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ACCEPTED THE INVITATION. THE PRECISE DATES REMAIN TO BE SET AND WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN DUE COURSE.

THE INVITATION HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SOME DAYS. WE WANT TO HAVE THE SAME KIND OF THOROUGHGOING EXCHANGE WITH MR. BEGIN ON HOW TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE PEACE

EFFORTS AS WE HAD WITH PRESIDENT SADAT HERE RECENTLY.

Q. DOES THAT INCLUDE A VISIT TO CAMP DAVID, DO YOU KNOW?

A. I'LL HAVE NOTHING ON THAT -- LET ME CONTINUE. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS KIND OF QUIET EXCHANGE HELD IN THE SPIRIT OF DEEP FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES WILL ENABLE US BETTER TO CONTINUE OUR ACTIVE EFFORTS TO HELP THE PARTIES MOVE FORWARD.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

DID YOU ASK ABOUT HOW THIS WAS RELATED TO ARMS?

Q. YES.

A. IN OUR VIEW THE VISIT IS TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE ARMS DECISIONS. LET ME ADD THAT WE DON'T CONSIDER THIS TO BE A CRISIS VISIT AND WE DON'T CONSIDER THAT THERE IS A CRISIS IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 040710

Q. WELL THEN, THERE SEEMS TO BE A BASIC DISAGREEMENT ALREADY, BETWEEN YOU AND THE ISRAELIS ON WHAT EXACTLY THIS VISIT IS SUPPOSED TO ACCOMPLISH AND WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT. HE SEEMS TO THINK IT'S ABOUT THE AIRPLANES. YOU SEEM TO THINK IT'S TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THAT.

Q. YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF HE BROUGHT IT UP, WOULD YOU?

A. NO, WE WOULD NOT MIND IF HE BROUGHT IT UP. I HAVE OUTLINED THE AIMS OF THE VISIT AS WE SEE THEM.

Q. YOU WOULD AGREE THAT THERE APPEARS TO BE QUITE A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE AIMS AS SEEN FROM BOTH CAPITALS.

A. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR ME TO MAKE A GENERAL STATEMENT ON U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS:

IN GENERAL, WE CONSIDER THE TIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES TO BE ENDURING AND STRONG. CLEARLY, ISRAEL AND WE DIFFER ON SOME ISSUES. PART OF THAT RELATIONSHIP, AS IS ALWAYS THE CASE BETWEEN CLOSE FRIENDS, IS A FRANK AIRING OF DIFFERENCES. BUT THESE DIFFERENCES DO NOT IN THE LEAST DETRACT FROM OUR COMMON SEARCH FOR PEACE AND THE LASTING COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARMS DECISIONS ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY ALTER THE BASIC MILITARY

BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST NOR DO THEY HAMPER THE CONTINUING EFFORTS TO REACH AN OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 040710

IN OUR VIEW THOSE DECISIONS CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED AND GIVE THEM THE CONFIDENCE TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE MOVEMENT TOWARD A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Q. ON MARCH 31, 1976, CANDIDATE CARTER MADE A STATEMENT IN THE "ST. LOUIS JEWISH LETTER" OPPOSING THE SALE OF ARMS TO EGYPT THAT COULD BE USED IN A STRIKE AGAINST ISRAEL." AS I GATHER, THE F-15, IF LAUNCHED FROM TWO OF SAUDI ARABIA'S BASES, COULD BE OVER ISRAEL IN TEN MINUTES. I AM WONDERING, IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THIS PROMISE OF CANDIDATE CARTER DEEMED INOPERATIVE REGARDING THE CARTER PROVISION OF SUCH ARMS FOR SAUDI ARABIA?

A. REGARDING STATEMENTS MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OR THE PRESIDENT WHEN HE WAS A CANDIDATE, I WOULD REFER YOU TO THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT I THINK WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT WE DO NOT SEE THESE PROPOSED ARMS SALES AS PRESENTING A PROBLEM AND CREATING AN UNBALANCED SITUATION IN THE MIDDL EAST.

Q. THERE IS A REPORT THIS MORNING THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS FURIOUS WITH PAUL WARNKE FOR OBJECTING TO THE SALE OF 60 F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA. NOW I WAS WONDERING, HOW CAN THE SALE OF F-15S, HICH CAN BE REGARDED AS ANOTHER PROMISE OF MR. CARTER -- A REDUCTION IN THE COMMERCE OF WEAPONS OF WAR -- AND HOW DOES THIS ADHERE TO THE PROMISE TO SUPPORT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL? WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

A. THE ONLY THING I HAVE ON THAT IS THAT CONTRARY TO THAT REPORT, ACDA SUPPORTED THE SALE AS PART OF A MIDDLE EAST PACKAGE -- THE SALE OF THE F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA AS PART OF A MIDDLE EAST PACKAGE.

Q. EVANS AND NOVAK ARE INACCURATE. IS THAT IT?
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 040710

A. I AM JUST REFERRING TO THE ACDA POSITION.

Q. AS PART OF "THIS" MIDDLE EAST PACKAGE?

A. NO AS PART OF "A" MIDDLE EAST PACKAGE.

Q. OR SOME DIFFERENT MIDDLE EAST PACKAGE?

A. I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER TO THAT FOR YOU BUT I THINK THE IDEA BEING THAT IT SHOULD BE AN OVERALL PACKAGE.

Q. I GET THE IDEA, BUT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY, THEN, THAT MR. WARNKE SUPPORTED THIS CONFIGURATION OF AN ARMS PACKAGE?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING SPECIFIC ON HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS PARTICULAR CONFIGURATION. ALL I HAVE IS THAT HE APPROVED IT AS PART OF THE PACKAGE.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Q. HE APPROVED THIS NUMBER OF PLANES FOR SAUDI ARABIA?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW IF HE APPROVED THE NUMBER?

A. YES, I DON'T KNOW.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW IF HE APPROVED "THIS" PACKAGE.
HE JUST THOUGHT IF YOU ARMED SAUDI ARABIA, IT OUGHT TO BE
PART OF A PACKAGE -- THAT IS ALL YOU ARE SAYING?

A. ALL I CAN DO IS GO BACK TO THE STATEMENT. THAT'S ALL.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 040710

Q. IT DOESN'T HELP. YOU KNOW THAT STATEMENT DOESN'T
HELP -- IT'S CLEVER, BUT IT DOESN'T ANSWER THE QUESTION.

A. ALL RIGHT, I'M SORRY, THAT'S ALL I HAVE.

Q. YOU SAID THAT THERE WAS NO CRISIS AND THAT BEGIN'S
TRIP WAS NOT A CRISIS TRIP. WHY THEN, DID YOU VOLUNTEER
THE STATEMENT WHICH WAS FULL OF FRANK DIFFERENCES, AND
SO ON AND SO FORTH? WHY DID YOU DO THAT IF THERE IS
NO CRISIS?

A. I VOLUNTEERED THE STATEMENT BECAUSE THE QUESTIONS
WERE SUCH THAT WE WANTED TO MAKE OUR POSITION CLEAR.
THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS ABOUT ISRAELI REACTIONS AND WHAT
THIS OR THAT INTERPRETATION MIGHT BE OF OUR DECISION
TO SELL THE ARMS.

Q. HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE IT REALLY -- MEANING
ISRAELI - U.S. RELATIONS TODAY, FEBRUARY THE 15TH?

A. WELL, I THINK THIS STATEMENT HAS GONE TO THAT POINT.

I WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE RELATIONS AS VERY CLOSE; AND
CLOSE RELATIONS DO NOT MEAN THAT YOU CANNOT HAVE
OCCASIONAL DISAGREEMENT.

Q. COULD YOU FIT THIS VISIT INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT
ARE SOON TO START AGAIN ON FURTHER DECLARATION OF
PRINCIPLES? DO YOU HAVE A TIME FOR ATHERTON TO GO TO
THE AREA? WILL HE BE COMING BACK WHEN BEGIN IS HERE?

A. ATHERTON WILL LEAVE THIS WEEKEND. HE WILL BE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST THE FIRST PART OF NEXT WEEK.

Q. WHERE WILL HE GO?
UNCLASSIFIED

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

A. THE EXACT ITINERARY HAS NOT BEEN WORKED OUT.

Q. HE WILL BE IN THE AREA UNTIL BEGIN'S VISIT?

A. HE WILL BE IN THE AREA MORE OR LESS INDEFINITELY BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING SPECIFICALLY ON WHAT EFFECT MR. BEGIN'S VISIT WILL HAVE -- IF HE WILL BE COMING BACK FOR THAT OR NOT -- I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

Q. A HOUSEKEEPING DETAIL. THE SECRETARY SAYS HE IS THINKING OF MAKING ROY AN AMBASSADOR AT LARGE. WILL THAT BE DONE IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS TRIP, DO YOU KNOW?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE SO. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE WAS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THAT BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS BEFORE MR. ATHERTON LEFT, BUT I CAN'T, I CAN'T GIVE A DEFINITIVE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

Q. THIS STATEMENT THAT YOU HAVE JUST ISSUED, WOULD YOU HAVE GIVEN IT TO US IF YOU HAD NOT BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. WELL, THIS WAS NOT SOMETHING I WAS GOING TO COME OUT AND PRESENT, NECESSARILY AS A STATEMENT, BUT IT WAS ASSUMED THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REPORTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, THAT QUESTIONS WOULD RISE THAT WOULD MAKE THE STATEMENT APPROPRIATE.

Q. IF YOU CONSIDERED IT A TIMELY STATEMENT WHY DIDN'T YOU COME OUT WITH IT AS A STATEMENT WITHOUT BEING ASKED ABOUT IT?
UNCLASSIFIED

A. AS TO WHEN WE VOLUNTEER STATEMENTS AND DON'T VOLUNTEER

STATEMENTS, I DON'T REALLY HAVE A REACTION. BUT I THINK IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENTS IT WAS FELT THAT THE QUESTION WOULD ARISE.

Q. ON WHAT BASIS DO YOU SAY THAT IT WILL GIVE EGYPT, ISRAEL AND SAUDI ARABIA CONFIDENCE TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT? I ADDRESS MY QUESTION PARTICULARLY TO THE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN THAT COMES FROM ISRAEL AND SOME MEMBERS OF THE HILL. ON WHAT BASIS DO YOU BELIEVE THAT IT GIVES THEM CONFIDENCE?

A. I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT. WE HAVE HAD THE DISCUSSIONS, THE BACKGROUNDERS ON THIS,

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

AND THE ON-THE-RECORD COMMENTS, AND I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD TODAY. THERE WILL BE FURTHER PRESENTATIONS TO CONGRESS WHEN THIS QUESTION COMES UP BEFORE CONGRESS THIS MONTH.

Q. YES, WELL THEN COULD YOU PLEASE, THEN, TAKE THAT AS A QUESTION, SINCE IT BECOMES A MAJOR PART OF YOUR EXPLANATION FOR PROVIDING THE WEAPONS AT THIS TIME. "THESE DECISIONS CONTRIBUTED TO LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS" THAT'S A JUDGMENT. THE OTHER ONE THAT "IT GIVES THEM THE CONFIDENCE" I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THAT IN LIGHT OF THE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM ONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES. IT WOULD APPEAR ON THE SURFACE, GIVEN THOSE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN, THAT IT GIVES THEM LESS CONFIDENCE.

A. THESE ARE CONSIDERATIONS THAT WENT INTO OUR DECISION AND THESE ARE JUDGMENTS THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE. WE, OBVIOUSLY, CAN'T DECIDE ON SOMEBODY ELSE'S BEHALF HOW UNCLASSIFIED

THEY ARE GOING TO REACT TO SOMETHING. BUT THESE WERE JUDGMENTS THAT WE MADE IN THE CONSIDERATION THAT WAS GIVEN TO THIS DECISION.

Q. BOTH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, YESTERDAY, AND YOU TODAY, HAVE REPEATED THE BELIEF THAT THIS WILL NOT AFFECT THE MILITARY BALANCE. IF ANYTHING, IT WILL RESTORE IT. COULD YOU MAKE AVAILABLE TO US WHATEVER STATE DEPARTMENT STUDIES YOU HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT POINT?

A. I WOULD EXPECT THAT WE COULD NOT MAKE THOSE AVAILABLE.

Q. THEN, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT IT ON FAITH UNTIL YOU DO.

A. I'M SAYING THAT THIS IS OUR CONSIDERED JUDGMENT.

Q. OBVIOUSLY, SOME PEOPLE DISAGREE. CAN YOU GO TO YOUR PEOPLE AND TRY TO EXPLAIN TO US HOW IT DOES RESTORE THE MILITARY BALANCE?

A. I WILL ASK IF THERE IS ANYTHING WE CAN PUT ON THE RECORD REGARDING THIS QUESTION OF BALANCE.

Q. IN HIS STATEMENT TODAY TO THE KNESSET, MR. BEGIN ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO FORMALLY RECONSIDER THE SALE OF ARMS TO SAUDI ARABIA AND TO EGYPT AND TO ADD MORE PLANES TO THE CONTINGENT EARMARKED FOR ISRAEL. WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THAT?

A. THE SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY MADE CLEAR THAT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

THE DECISIONS HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND THAT THE CONCERNS AND CONSIDERATION S OF OTHERS WERE PART OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

I THINK THIS GOES TO A PREVIOUS QUESTION AS WELL. AS THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY, WE WERE AWARE THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS NOT HAPPY WITH OUR DECISION ON SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. WE HAVE EXPLAINED OUR DECISIONS TO ISRAEL. WE HOPE THAT IN THE DAYS AHEAD, AS OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS PROCEED, THAT THE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DECISIONS WILL BE ANSWERED.

Q. DOES THIS MEAN THAT YOU ARE REJECTING MR. BEGIN'S CALL FOR A RECONSIDERATION OF THE SALE PROP-OSALS?

A. THE DECISION IS A FIRM DECISION AND WE HAVE MADE CLEAR WHAT WENT INTO THAT DECISION, I BELIEVE.

Q. SO THIS MEANS YOU WILL NOT BE RECONSIDERING THE SALE PROPOSALS?

A. THE STATEMENT I JUST MADE I THINK RESPONDS TO THAT. THIS IS A FIRM DECISION THAT WAS BASED ON CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS. AND WE HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF OTHERS.

Q. I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW THAT LAST ANSWER YOU HAVE EVEN BEGINS TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION. I THINK, IN FACT, IT SIMPLY ADDS TO THE QUESTION. IN YOUR INITIAL STATEMENT THAT YOU MADE, YOU SPOKE OF THE DIFFERENCES THAT CLEARLY EXIST BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND

ISRAEL AND YOU HAVE SIMPLY UNDERSCORED THAT ONCE AGAIN; AND IN THAT CONTEXT, KNOWING THAT THE DIFFERENCES EXISTED, KNOWING THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT IT, PERHAPS I COULD JUST ADD MY QUESTION. I WONDER IF YOU COULD COME BACK WITH A MORE FORCEFUL ANSWER AS TO UNCLASSIFIED

HOW AND WHY YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU BELIEVE THIS GIVES THE PARTIES ADDITIONAL CONFIDENCE IN MOVING TOWARD A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT?

A. WELL, THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTIES INVOLVED.

Q. I'M SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT ONE PARTY. I DON'T DOUBT THAT THE SAUDIS ARE HAPPIER NOW THAN THEY WERE

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

YESTERDAY.

A. I THINK THE BEST ANSWER I CAN GIVE YOU IS THAT WE TRIED TO LOOK AT THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVERALL BALANCE IN THE REGION. THIS WAS PUT FORTH AS A PROPOSAL WHICH CONSIDERS MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME, AND THE NEEDS OF ALL THESE COUNTRIES WERE LOOKED AT AT THE SAME TIME AND CONSIDERED TOGETHER.

Q. WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT "OVERALL BALANCE IN THE REGION," I WAS UNAWARE THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS EVER CONSIDERED TO BE A CONFRONTATION STATE.

A. IT IS NOT.

Q. WHAT DOES SAUDI ARABIA, THEN, HAVE TO DO WITH THE OVERALL BALANCE IN THE REGION?

A. IT'S IN THE REGION.

Q. I UNDERSTAND. ARE YOU SPEAKING OF SOME OTHER BALANCE THAN BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES?

A. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE GENERAL BALANCE IN THAT REGION. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE BALANCE BETWEEN ISRAEL
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 13 STATE 040710

AND THE ARAB STATES.

Q. AND I REPEAT MY QUESTION: WHAT DOES SAUDI ARABIA HAVE TO DO WITH IT? IT'S NEVER BEEN A CONFRONTATION STATE; ISRAEL HAS NEVER ATTACKED SAUDI ARABIA, NOR TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HAS SAUDI ARABIA ATTACKED ISRAEL

A. MY ANSWER IS THE SAME. IT'S IN THE REGION -- WE'RE TALKING ABOUT REGIONAL BALANCE. I DON'T THINK THAT NECESSARILY HAS TO INVOLVE ONLY THE CONFRONTATION

STATES.

Q. IS SAUDI ARABIA SUPPORTING THE SADAT INITIATIVE?

A. I DON'T HAVE AN UP-TO-DATE READOUT FOR YOU ON SAUDI ARABIA'S VIEWS ON THAT.

Q. ONE OF THE REACTIONS ATTRIBUTED TO ISRAELI SOURCES YESTERDAY RAISED THE SPECTOR OF AMERICAN MERCENARIES FLYING THESE F-15S IN A WAR AGAINST ISRAEL. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THAT?

A. THERE ARE NO CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH I COULD FORESEE F-15S BEING FLOWN BY --

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Q. IT WAS OFFERED SERIOUSLY. THAT IS WHY I ASKED.

A. DO YOU MEAN WITH AMERICAN GOVERNMENT APPROVAL?

Q. NO, NO. MERCENARIES.

A. NO. I UNDERSTAND.

Q. ON THE THEORY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIND PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO FLY THE PLANE. THE SAUDIS CON'T KNOW HOW
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 14 STATE 040710

TO FLY THE PLANE. THEY WOULD HAVE TO HIRE PILOTS IS THE POINT.

A. I WOULD ASSUME THAT WE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO MAKE SURE THAT AMERICANS WERE NOT INVOLVED IN FIGHTING AGAINST ISRAEL.

Q. COULD YOU ADDRESS YOURSELF TO THE QUESTION OF THE PACKAGE BECAUSE THERE IS SOME CONFUSION ABOUT IT?
IF PART OF THE PACKAGE IS NOT APPROVED BY THE CONGRESS, IS THE ADMINISTRATION GOING, THEN, TO RECONSIDER THE OTHER PARTS OF THE PACKAGE?

A. THE SENIOR OFFICIAL WHO HELD THE BACKGROUNDER ON THIS I BELIEVE ANSWERED THIS QUESTION.

Q. I DON'T REALLY THINK IT WAS ANSWERED, BUT IF YOU THINK IT WAS, THEN COULD YOU TELL ME NOW WHAT YOU THINK IT IS THAT THE SENIOR OFFICIAL SAID?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THE RECORD FOR YOU.

Q. YOU CAN GO ON BACKGROUND.

A. I DON'T HAVE THE MATERIAL WITH ME, BUT I'LL BE HAPPY TO REVIEW WHAT WAS SAID ON BACKGROUND.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE THAT, THEN, AS AN ON-THE-RECORD QUESTION?

A. I WILL TAKE IT AS AN ON-THE-RECORD QUESTION. I'M NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN I CAN GIVE YOU AN ON-THE-RECORD ANSWER, BUT I WILL TAKE IT.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 15 STATE 040710

Q. BECAUSE THERE IS AN IMPRESSION THAT THE ADMINISTRA-TION IS GOING TO RECONSIDER IT, IF PART, IF A THIRD OF

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

THE TROIKA, IS CUT OFF. IS THAT THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU WANT TO BE SPREAD PUBLICLY?

A. I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ANY IMPRESSION THAT WASN'T GIVEN IN THE BACKGROUNDER, AND I'LL LOOK FURTHER INTO IT.

Q. REPHRASING THE QUESTION YOU WERE ASKED IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WAY, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN ANSWER IT IN THIS WAY: WHY DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY AT THIS POINT TO REAFFIRM ITS CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH ISRAEL?

A. SPECIFICALLY, WE STARTED CONSIDERING THE REACTION THAT I GAVE YOU AFTER THE ISRAELIS' REACTIONS IN REGARD TO THE ARMS SALES AND AFTER CERTAIN STATEMENTS WERE MADE IN THE KNESSET AND AFTER THERE WAS SPECULATION ABOUT A CRISIS IN ISRAELI-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

Q. WHERE WAS THAT SPECULATION?

A. IN PRESS REPORTS.

Q. YES. YOU SAID, "I WOULD ASSUME THAT WE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO SEE THAT NO AMERICANS ARE INVOLVED AS MERCENARIES AGAINST ISRAEL." THAT WAS YOUR STATEMENT, AS I RECALL IT.

A. THAT NO AMERICAN S WOULD BE INVOLVED (INAUDIBLE)

A. I WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IF YOU COULD TELL ME ON WHAT BASIS DO YOU MAKE SUCH AN ASSUMPTION, GIVEN THE EXECUTION OF ONE AMERICAN MERCENARY IN ANGOLA AND THE REPORTS THAT THERE ARE DOZENS IF NOT HUNDREDS OF UNCLASSIFIED

AMERICAN MERCENARIES -- IF THAT TERM IS DISPUTABLE -- NOW SERVING IN THE RHODESIAN ARMY?

A. I DO NOT HAVE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON THIS. I MAKE MY STATEMENT ON THE BASIS OF OUR LONG-TERM AND ABIDING COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL.

Q. BUT WHAT MEASURES WOULD THE UNITED STATES TAKE TO INHIBIT SOME AMERICANS FROM FLYING -- THE SAUDI ARABIANS WOULD PAY WELL. WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD INHIBIT THE AMERICAN MERCENARIES FROM FLYING FOR THE SAUDI ARABIANS? COULD YOU TELL US THAT?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE FULL LEGAL POSITION ON THIS. THIS IS SOMETHING I WOULD HAVE TO LOOK INTO.

Q. THERE IS A REPORT CIRCULATING THAT THE SECRETARY,

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

IN ONE OF THOSE ENDLESS BRIEFINGS ON THE HILL, SAID
THAT THE SAUDIS IN FACT WANT SADAT TO BREAK OFF THE
TALKS WITH ISRAEL. COULD YOU PLEASE TAKE THIS QUESTION
AND TELL ME WHETHER THE SAUDIS IN FACT SUPPORT OR REJECT
THE SADAT INITIATIVE?

A. I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU
ANYTHING ON THE SAUDI POSITION. I THINK THAT WOULD NEED
TO COME FROM THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT.

Q. MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE US THIS. CAN SOMEBODY IN THIS
BUILDING PRODUCE STATEMENTS BY THE SAUDIS, PUBLIC
STATEMENTS SUPPORTING SADAT'S INITIATIVE, BECAUSE
THE ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA IS BEING JUSTIFIED OR
RATIONALIZED PARTLY ON THE COOPERATION IN SUPPORTING
THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. I DON'T FIND THEM OPPOSING IT
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 17 STATE 040710

VERBALLY, BUT HAVE THE SAUDIS EVER SAID ANYTHING FOR
THE RECORD THAT YOU CAN SHOW US THAT SHOWS THAT THEY ARE
ON YOUR SIDE?

A. I REALLY THINK THAT IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO COME
FROM THE SAUDIS, ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU'VE SAID -- NOT YOU, THE
SECRETARY AND OTHER PEOPLE HERE -- HAVE SAID THAT THE
SAUDIS ARE SUPPORTING OR COOPERATING, AND I COULDN'T
DOCUMENT IT MYSELF. I WONDERED IF YOU COULD, IF THE
STATE DEPARTMENT COULD DOCUMENT THAT CLAIM?

A. I THINK ANYTHING ON THE PUBLIC RECORD REGARDING
THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT SHOULD COME FROM THE SAUDI
GOVERNMENT.

Q. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT WHAT THE SAUDIS HAVE SAID.

YOU HAVE SAID, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS SAID THE
SAUDIS ARE SUPPORTING THE SADAT INITIATIVE. DO YOU HAVE
ANY FACTS TO BACK THAT UP?

A. I BELIEVE THE STATEMENT WAS THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE
TAKEN A SUPPORTIVE ROLE IN TRYING TO FIND A PEACEFUL
SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

A. AND WE SHOULD ACCEPT THAT ON FAITH, IS THAT WHAT
YOU'RE SAYING?

A. I'M SAYING THAT IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC
QUESTION ABOUT WHAT THE SAUDI POSITION IS, THE PUBLIC
STATEMENT ABOUT WHAT THE SAUDI POSITION IS SHOULD COME
FROM THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Q. YOU SAID IN YOUR STATEMENT THAT THE VISIT IS TOTALLY
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 18 STATE 040710

UNRELATED TO THE ARMS DECISION. THE SECRETARY SAID LAST
NIGHT THAT THE PARTIES WERE NOTIFIED OF THE ARMS
DECISION ON MONDAY. WHEN DID THE INVITATION TO BEGIN GO?

A. I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER TO THAT. I JUST KNOW THAT IT
HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SOME DAYS. I DON'T HAVE
ANYTHING SPECIFIC ON WHEN THE INVITATION WAS SENT. I
WOULD STAND BY THE STATEMENT I MADE REGARDING OUR VIEW OF
THE VISIT THAT HE'S NOT COMING HERE TO DISCUSS THE
ARMS SALES; HE'S COMING HERE TO DISCUSS THE OVERALL
QUESTION OF A SETTLEMENT.

Q. DURING OR JUST PRIOR TO THE SADAT VISIT, WE WERE
TOLD THAT PRIME MINISTER WAS COMING HERE -- AND FORGIVE
ME; I FORGET NOW WHETHER IT WAS APRIL OR MAY -- THAT
THERE HAD BEEN A LONGSTANDING PLAN FOR HIM TO COME HERE
AND THAT, IN EFFECT, WAS GOING TO BE THE SECOND PART OF
THOSE TWO LEGS. SADAT WAS COMING FOR THE ONE VISIT,
BEGIN WAS COMING FOR THE OTHER.

NOW, IF IT WAS NOT THE ARMS SALES OR THE ARMS
PACKAGE THAT HAS PROMPTED THAT SCHEDULE TO BE MOVED UP,
WHAT WAS IT?

A. I ONLY HAVE THE GENERAL RESPONSE THAT I'VE ALREADY
GIVEN, OUTLINING OUR VIEW OF THE REASONS FOR THE VISIT.
I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING MORE THAN THAT.

Q. I'D LIKE TO FOLLOW THAT UP. IS THIS PART OF A
TREND: MR. BEGIN CAME IN DECEMBER, MR. SADAT IN

FEBRUARY.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 19 STATE 040710

SO CAN WE EXPECT MR. SADAT LIKE IN MAY OR APRIL AGAIN --
SERIOUSLY.

A. NO. I WOULDN'T SAY THAT IT'S NECESSARILY PART OF A
TREND. I WOULD SAY THAT WHEN THE LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES
THINK THAT IT'S APPROPRIATE TO HAVE FACE-TO-FACE
CONVERSATION, THEN AT THAT TIME THEY WOULD WORK OUT SUCH
ARRANGEMENTS. I WOULDN'T SAY NECESSARILY THAT A PATTERN
IS DEVELOPING.

Q. ON PAGE 404 OF THE COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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AND PRACTICES, IT SAYS UNDER SAUDI ARABIA: "ISLAM IS THE ESTABLISHED RELIGION OF SAUDI ARABIA AND SAUDIS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO PRACTICE OTHER RELIGIONS, ALTHOUGH NON-MOSLEM FOREIGNERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD PRIVATE AND DISCREET RELIGIOUS SERVICES."

MY QUESTION IS: ARE WE AS CONCERNED ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN SAUDI ARABIA AS WE ARE ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ARGENTINA?

A. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

2. THE FOLLOWING WAS POSTED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN AT THE FEBRUARY 13 NOON BRIEFING.

Q. DOES THE U.S. ACCEPT THAT THERE IS A BASIS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR THE SYRIAN TROOPS TO BE IN LEBANON, AND IF SO WHAT IS THIS BASIS?

A. SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON ARE PART OF THE ARAB LEAGUE-SPONSORED ARAB DETERRENT FORCE, WHOSE PRESENCE IN THAT COUNTRY WAS REQUESTED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS A SOVEREIGN DECISION BY A CONSTITUTIONAL
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GOVERNMENT.

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